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 Text: Psalm 19
 Title: God is speaking to you!
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Charlie Brown, Lucy and Linus are lying on the ground, looking up into the sky. And Lucy says, "If you use your imagination, you can see lots of things in the cloud formations. What do you think you see, Linus?"

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Linus responds, "Well, those clouds up there look like the map of the British Honduras on the Caribbean. And that cloud looks a little like the profile of Thomas Eakins, the famous painter and sculptor. And that group of clouds over there gives me the impression of the stoning of Stephen. I can see the Apostle Paul standing here to one side."

Lucy a bit stunned replies to him, "Uh huh, that's very good. (But) What do you see in the clouds, Charlie Brown?" Charlie Brown replies, "Well, I was going to say I saw a ducky and a horsie, but I've changed my mind."

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So I wonder, what do you see when you look into the skies? King David looked into the heavens and whatever direction he looked, he saw, God. So, he writes in Psalm 19:1, "*The heavens declare **the glory of God**; the skies declare the work **of His hands***"

Is that what you see when you are out in the country at night & look up at the stars? Is that what you think about as you walk along the beach and feel the heat of the sun? Is that what comes to mind when you see a picture of Mt Everest or the Great Barrier Reef or Uluru?

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I was reading about a guy called Wally Amos, describing what he saw as he looked out across the Grand Canyon. He said, "*The setting sun orchestrated a symphony of subtle hues on the canyon's walls ... It took your breath away. It was so splendid, so over whelming, that I stood there awestruck. All I could think of was God. For the first time in my life, I could feel Him, His power, His majesty & those puny feelings of staleness & discouragement seemed to drop away from me. It was as if God had handed me His calling card.*"

In nature, God hands us his calling card. In creation, God goes public. As we look up at the skies and look all around us God actually speaks to us. God speaks! He is not silent. He is not aloof. He is not distant. God wants to speak to you and to me. David in this Psalm is saying God has set up all of his nature to act as a preacher, with a sermon to preach. And the sermon being preached by the heavens is all about the glory of God.

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1. The Skies (verses 1-6)

"*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge.*" This sermon of nature is continual. It is never ending - day after day - now that's a bit scary isn't it? A never-ending sermon! It's there all through the day, as the sun goes across the sky, magnificent, obedient. Science tell us that the sun is the most important body in our solar system, everything goes around it & is dependent upon it. But David reminds us that the sun does God's bidding.

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"⁵ It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber". There it is every morning like a bridegroom, champing at the bit to get married. *"It is like a champion rejoicing to run his course. ⁶ It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth."* There it is during the day like a champion showing off its power & its strength. But it was placed there by God. It was created by our Creator. The sun is then not to be worshipped; it points instead to the glory of God!

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And when the sun goes down, there is still the moon and the stars displaying the knowledge & the power of God. Sailors for thousands of the years, have looked up to the night sky and been guided by their trustworthiness. People of all generations have looked up at the Milky Way and felt so small and insignificant in comparison to the world that they live in. How great and mighty and glorious must be the one whose hands flung those stars into place? Yes, if the sky is glorious, how much more glorious must be the one who made it?

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God's message is continual and His message is universal. *³ They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. ⁴ Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."* As John Calvin once wrote, *"...there is not a spot in the universe wherein one cannot discern at least some sparks of his glory."* So, from Moscow to Memphis, from Rome to the rainforest, from Australia to Antarctica – everywhere there is evidence of God. If a picture paints a thousand words, the picture of creation shouts a billion words, to each and every inhabitant on this earth.

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So, language is no barrier, distance is no barrier. Intellect is no barrier. Age is no barrier. The voice of the heavens has reached every person in every age in every place. But I suppose the next question to ask is, are we listening to what God is saying? Well, the apostle Paul helps to answer that question when he turns to this general revelation, God's speaking to us through the world around us and he says in Romans 1:20, *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.**"*

What Paul is saying is that all people have seen God's creation. All have heard about God's power and nature. They do understand. They do know. They know they should worship God. They know that he is their creator. But. But every one of us suppresses this truth and decides to go our own way. And so later on in Romans 10:18 Paul actually quotes Psalm 19:4 to come to the conclusion that all of us, Jew and Gentile of every age stands guilty before our great creator God. Creation is not enough. It doesn't **save anyone**. It only condemns us.

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Bertrand Russell, a well-known atheist, was once asked "What will you do, if when you die you find out that you're wrong, and in fact God does exist?" In reply he said, "I would go up to God and give him a good talking to for not making himself clearer." Well good luck with that Bertrand. Every minute of every day God has revealed himself to you and to me. Creation just cannot control itself. The skies are bursting to tell us all how great is our God.

Now Bertrand Russell and others might say, well I didn't hear God speak. Well think about it this way, if you shout at someone who is only 2m away and he doesn't respond, there are only 2 options, they are either deaf or they are ignoring you. Psalm 19 says God is shouting

to us through his world, if we don't hear him, we are either deaf or ignoring him. So, if person after person fails to respond to God speaking through the sky, God speaks again through

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2. The Scriptures (verse 7-11)

He doesn't just give us general revelation but specific revelation. What God's world fails to do, God does through His word. In the Scriptures God doesn't just reveal who he is but he reveals who we are and what we need to do to get back into relationship with Him.

"For the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul." God's law is complete, there is nothing left out. It is comprehensive, it does everything we need it to do. There is no part of your life, no problem that you will ever face, no question you will ever be troubled over, that the Word of God does not speak to and illuminate and meet. So, it is perfect, "reviving the soul."

"And the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple." You can count on what God says. The Bible will give you wisdom to live the good life. It will instruct you about what God is really like. *"The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart."* By reading about God's ways, his nature, his grace, we are not consumed by fear or overcome by doubts, we experience God's joy.

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"The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes." Following His commands doesn't squeeze all the goodness out of our lives, it helps us to live the life we were created for. It gives us a purpose in life, meaning and direction. Our eyes can now be focused not just on what is happening in my little part of the world, I see what God is doing everywhere.

"The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever." So that allows me to live in reverent fear before my Creator. I am not scared of him, but I am full of awe for him. I respect what he has to say. He will always be with me and so I will want to be seen doing what is right, true and admirable. So that will encourage me to follow his word. Because *"the ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous."* They will show me what is right in God's eyes.

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There is a clarity in Scripture that is not found in the skies. We can learn not just about God but about our God. For the word for God in the verse 6 is a general one Elohim. But the word for God in this second section is a specific one, Yahweh. The God of the Bible. The promise giving God. The God who reveals himself through Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel. This God has revealed himself as the one who is true, reliable, soul renewing, life preserving, joy-inducing, energy giving. This is the God who can revive our soul. Who can give us wisdom and joy and insight and righteousness.

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That is why God's word *is more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb."* For God's word when it is added to God's works shows God's power *and* his compassion. His divine nature *and* his grace toward us humans. The fact that he is the creator *and* the Saviour.

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In *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*, Kathleen Norris recounts the story of a South Dakota rancher and his bride who received an expensive Bible as a wedding gift from his grandfather. They wrote a thank-you note and stowed the Bible away on a shelf. But the

grandfather kept asking the couple how they liked the Bible. The rancher was confused. Hadn't he already expressed his appreciation? But the grandfather persisted. Eventually, the young man dug out the gift. As he leafed through it, \$20 bills fluttered out, 66 in all—one at the beginning of Genesis and in each succeeding book in the Bible.

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For the riches of the world are great. But the riches of the Word are even greater. Without the Bible, we hear nature's sermon, but we have no idea which road to take to establish a relationship with God. Nature's sermon then is unable to convert our soul. We need the Bible for that. And the Bible does that by giving us the Law, to show us our need for God's grace. By giving us the history of the people of God, to show us that like them, we need God to step into our lives and rescue us from our sin.

We need the prophets, to call us back to our Father, when we have wandered away. We need the gospel to show us that the invisible God, was made visible in the form of his one and only Son Jesus. We need the death of Jesus to show us that the only way our sins could be paid for was when he swapped his life for our lives. We need the resurrection of Jesus to show us that God has now defeated our greatest enemy, death. We need the letters of the NT to show us how the coming of Jesus will change our lives. And we need the book of Revelation to remind us that one day Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead.

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This is why it is good that you are not worshipping God on the golf course this morning. Yes, there is a sermon out there, one we all need to take heed off. But we have an even greater need for God's word. To hear it read and preached. To open it up at church and at home and allow it to speak into our lives. To come together in small groups to discuss it and ponder it and meditate on it and apply it to our lives.

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You see once you understand that for Christians the value of the Bible is beyond measure, you can understand the great sacrifices Christians have been willing to make for the Bible. I think of a guy named William Tyndale. Tyndale lived in England in the 1500s and was the first person to translate the Bible from its original languages into the English language. That lifelong project cost Tyndale his career, his freedom, and ultimately his very life. It's hard to imagine, but he was burned at the stake for translating the Bible into English.

Just before he died Tyndale wrote to the governor of the Belgian gaol that he was in. He said *"I entreat your lordship... that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my own goods which he has in my possession, a warmer cap for I suffer extremely from cold in the head. A warmer coat also for that which I have is very thin, also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings... I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech ... that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible. "*

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Tyndale's soul needed reviving, his life lacked joy and light and he knew that the key to each of these things was the Scriptures, God's word. For God would speak to him through his word and comfort and disciple him and train him in righteous living. So, before I asked you what you saw when you looked up at the sky, now I am asking you what do you hear when you come before the word of God. Are you hearing God speak to you? Is he speaking to you today? If you were to ask for one thing, only one thing would it be a copy of God's word?

You see God is speaking to you and to me today. Creation might be the entrée, but the main course, the bread and butter is through the bible. It is the bible that produces in us reverence, trust, obedience, righteousness. So, the skies speaks of a God. The Scriptures describe how we can know this God and when we take these words to heart, we begin to see God's salvation available to us.

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3. Salvation (verses 12-14)

For in the last couple of verses David moves from what we see and what we hear, to what we should do. For the knowledge of God & the word of God in the end is extremely practical

There was once a physics professor who was teaching his class the theory of the pendulum. One day he gathered them all in the university gym for them to discover that the professor had rigged a large, heavy ball on the end of one of the ropes that hung along the centre of the gym. He pulled the ball back and then asked the class, "Who can tell me what will happen when I let the ball go?" Well, several hands went up and the correct answer was given: "The ball will swing backwards and forwards in an ever-decreasing arc. The effect of friction will be such that the pendulum will slow down and eventually stop."

"Do the rest of you believe that?" asked the Professor. There was general nodding around the room. "Excellent" said the Professor. "So, who'll volunteer to come out here, hold the ball against their nose and then let it go?"

What do you think? Would you have volunteered? Would you have put your nose on the line? Can you see what the professor in that story has done? He's moved the question from being simply theoretical to being life changing. I mean if the theory's wrong you're going to get a nose job, aren't you? Expensive surgery to fix up your entire face.!

And that's what David does as well. If the law of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the precepts of the Lord, the commands of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, and the ordinances of the Lord are so valuable, then surely these things need to warn God's servants. And these words need to not just be heard but obeyed.

And if I am going to obey this Word, then I need to be able to discern my errors. I know, left to myself, I will justify a lot of my bad actions, I will find excuses or mitigating circumstances. Actually, I might be so blinded that I won't even see my errors. Others can see them they are as plain as the nose on my face but I don't often see them, they are hidden from my view.

But I need to not look at myself in my own mirror but in God's mirror. For he will see my hidden thoughts. He will keep me from wilful sins. He will not let my wrongdoings enslave me. He will lead me to Jesus who will enable me to be innocent of great transgression. For like any OT passage that is where we need to head next. From the skies, scripture, salvation

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4. To the Son

Hebrews 1 says *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son, whom he*

appointed heir of all things & through whom he made the universe. The son is the radiance of God's glory & the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

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Yes, God speaks through the skies, through the scriptures, through salvation but if you want to not just see and hear but to experience God Himself, we do that only through his Son Jesus Christ. He is the one who in the beginning helped make the heavens and the earth. He is the Word of God that helps revive the soul and helps make me altogether righteous. And he is the only real example in Scripture, put before us, of someone who was blameless, whose words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart were completely pleasing to God sight. The only one who always had God as his Lord, his rock & his redeemer.

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Put it another way. The skies show God's fingerprints everywhere. The Scriptures explain God's blueprint for our lives. But it is the Son whose footprints we are to follow in. And an example of how this all works in practise is the wise men. Remember they are looking at the sky and they see God's special star, and they follow it. They end up in Jerusalem where they are pointed to the Scriptures and told that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. And so, they go to Bethlehem and there they find the baby Jesus and they bow down to their Redeemer and worship him and give him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

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You see the skies point them to *a* King. The Scriptures points them to *the* king. And then they come to Jesus and worship him as *their* king. So as Warren Wiersbe once said "*the word in the heavens is fine, the Word in the head is better but the word in the heart is what transforms and matures us in Christ.*"

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Which just means that we need to get out into nature and enjoy the wonder, the majesty of our God. We need to walk along the river, climb that mountain, visit that island & remember how great thou art. But we need to do more than get out into our world, we need to get into the word. We need to listen, meditate, ponder, consider and trust God's word. Allow it to revive our soul, give us wisdom & joy & make us righteous. And last of all we need to get the word into us. To change us, to mould us and make us into the people we were designed and made to be. We need to follow Jesus footprints so that all that we are and all that we think and all that we do is pleasing to God and brings him the glory that he deserves.

So, for the tired soul, watching a sunset is nice, but it's not enough. It takes the Word of God Jesus to revive the soul. For the confused mind, playing a round of golf and feeling the presence of God in nature does make a difference. But it takes the Word of God Jesus to make wise the simple. For the grieving spirit, looking at the ocean or the stars that gives a sense of comfort and calm, but it is only the Word of God Jesus that gives joy to the heart.

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And when that word of God changes you, then that God becomes personal, *my* lord, *my* rock, *my* redeemer. So today as you look out at God's works & as you listen to God's word, be determined to become a work of God's hands. As he moulds you and shapes you more and more like his son Jesus.